Scofield's Fire: Manufactured Signs and the Manipulation of Christian Zionism in Israel's War on Iran

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June 21, 2025

In June 2025, fire-like trails lit up the night sky over Haifa, captured in a short video that quickly circulated online. To the trained eye, the event appeared to be a standard military flare drop—an unremarkable yet effective tactic used during air defense operations. But for many Christian Zionists in the United States, these glowing vertical streaks descending over the Holy Land carried prophetic weight. Interpreted as "fire from heaven," the scene reinforced a deeply held belief that God is actively fulfilling biblical prophecy through current events. This paper explores how visually mundane military activity can be reinterpreted as divine intervention when filtered through the theological framework established by the Scofield Reference Bible. By linking spiritual expectation to geopolitical allegiance, such spectacles become powerful tools of psychological influence. Whether the flare event was intentionally staged or merely repurposed by perception, its impact lies in the meaning assigned by its audience. In an age saturated with imagery and religious expectation, theological discernment is no longer optional—it is essential.

Keywords: Haifa, flares, Scofield Bible, Christian Zionism, MAGA, psychological operations, dispensationalism, military spectacle, prophetic interpretation, PSYOP, religious manipulation, Israel, evangelical politics, visual propaganda, theological discernment. A collaboration with GPT-4o. CC4.0.

Abstract

This paper examines a striking visual event recorded over the coastal city of Haifa on or around June 19–20, 2025, in which multiple bright, fire-like objects descended slowly through the night sky without producing any visible ground-level explosions. While technical analysis suggests these were most likely military illumination flares deployed over the Mediterranean—potentially in connection with active missile defense operations during a reported Iranian attack—the real significance of the event lies not in its physical characteristics but in its psychological and theological impact. For many American Christian Zionists, such imagery evokes deeply ingrained prophetic associations: "fire from heaven," divine intervention, or a sign of apocalyptic proximity. This paper contends that regardless of the material intent behind the deployment, the symbolic and emotional reception of the event functions as a modern psychological operation (PSYOP)—one that plays on religious expectations to solidify political alignment and justify continued military action.

Building on the precedent set by the Scofield Reference Bible, which reoriented evangelical theology toward an unwavering support for the modern state of Israel through a dispensationalist lens, the paper argues that present-day visual spectacles now serve a similar function. Whereas Scofield's influence was rooted in textual reinterpretation, today's manipulations are visual, visceral, and designed for viral distribution. The result is a population primed to interpret ambiguous military imagery as divine confirmation of their political and eschatological worldview. This manufactured convergence of war, faith, and media spectacle represents a potent form of belief management—one that deserves close scrutiny in an age where spiritual manipulation is no longer limited to doctrine but now extends to the theater of light, sky, and spectacle.

1. Introduction

In the late evening hours over Haifa, a striking and almost surreal scene unfolded: multiple streaks of fiery light descended slowly through the sky, casting a warm glow over the bay and reflecting off the water below. These luminous trails, captured sequentially in a short video excerpted into four still frames (Figure 1), suggest the use of military illumination flares—a common tactical deployment during aerial operations or missile defense exercises. Notably, there were no reported explosions at the points of descent, lending credence to the view that these were non-destructive and possibly defensive in nature, perhaps a response to the wave of missile and drone attacks reportedly launched from Iran at the time.

Yet while the physical characteristics of the event point toward conventional military explanations, the symbolic resonance of “fire from the sky” holds deep theological significance for a particular segment of the American population: Christian Zionists. For those steeped in dispensationalist prophecy, such an event—especially when seen over the land of Israel—can quickly be imbued with eschatological meaning. It becomes a "sign" rather than an action, a spiritual message rather than a strategic maneuver. These interpretations are not fringe. They are held by millions of Americans whose worldview, and often voting behavior, is profoundly shaped by a prophetic understanding of Israel’s role in the “last days.”

This fusion of religious belief with political commitment has a long and deliberate history. At the heart of it lies the Scofield Reference Bible, first published in 1909. More than just a study aid, Scofield’s annotated Bible inserted an interpretive framework—dispensationalism—that tied biblical prophecy to the modern state of Israel and elevated support for Israel into a religious imperative. Over the course of the 20th century, this theology was widely disseminated among American evangelicals and Pentecostals, and by the late 1970s and early 1980s, it had become a central tenet of the religious right and a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy engagement with Israel. The legacy of Scofield is not merely theological; it is geopolitical.

This paper argues that the flare event over Haifa, while physically unremarkable from a military perspective, functions as a psychological operation—not necessarily in the formal military sense, but as part of a broader system of influence. Whether deliberately staged for that purpose or simply opportunistically repurposed through media circulation, the event operates within an information environment where symbolic visual content drives religious and political reactions. The image of fire descending gently from heaven above the Holy Land becomes a mirror for belief, reinforcing existing commitments, quelling doubt, and subtly reactivating support for Israel and its military actions.

This is not a new strategy; it is a modern iteration of an old formula. Where Scofield once shaped hearts and minds through printed marginal notes, today's "signs and wonders" are distributed in pixels and pixels alone—designed for an age when belief can be triggered by a single viral frame. By examining the Haifa incident in its technical, symbolic, and theological dimensions, this paper aims to expose the mechanisms by which faith is not merely practiced, but manufactured and manipulated in the service of war.

2. The Event: Technical and Visual Analysis

The incident under investigation is captured in four sequential frames (Figure 1), extracted from a short video clip taken near Haifa approximately two days after reports of an Iranian missile barrage targeting various locations across Israel. The four images span a total duration of roughly 18 seconds, with each frame separated by approximately 6 seconds. The camera perspective suggests the footage was taken from an elevated urban setting overlooking Haifa Bay—possibly from the Carmel region, facing northward over the sea.

Figure 1. In Frame 1, a single bright fire-like object appears high in the sky, descending vertically with a faint trail behind it. There is no fragmentation, explosion, or lateral movement at this stage—only a controlled vertical descent, possibly slowed by a parachute or drag mechanism. By Frame 2, the fire appears to have either split or been joined by a second light source, and both now descend in parallel, slightly offset from one another. The brightness increases, casting a more intense glow over the horizon and beginning to reflect off the surface of the water. In Frame 3, the fiery trails are much lower, and a distinct visual impression emerges: these are not fast-moving projectiles but relatively slow-falling, persistent light sources, consistent with illumination flares. Their descent continues to be symmetrical, smooth, and undisturbed—further suggesting that they are equipped with stabilization devices such as parachutes. The lack of sound, smoke, or blast debris further supports the conclusion that these are non-explosive in nature. Finally, in Frame 4, one of the light sources is seen descending behind a low layer of atmospheric haze or thin cloud, creating a glowing halo effect and enhancing the perception of something supernatural or "heavenly" to the casual viewer.

From a technical standpoint, these features are consistent with aerial military flares, which are often deployed during periods of high alert or active engagement to provide nighttime illumination or to serve as decoys during aerial defense operations. These flares are designed to burn brightly while descending slowly,

often suspended beneath parachutes, and can remain visible for several seconds to minutes depending on their altitude and burn rate. The absence of ground-level explosions is fully consistent with this interpretation, as is the slow, elegant descent pattern—attributes that differentiate flares from ballistic missiles, anti-air interceptors, or re-entry debris.

Importantly, the event took place within the timeframe of a confirmed missile strike launched from Iran, with Haifa named among the impacted regions. Israeli air defenses were reportedly active across the north, and multiple hostile aerial objects—including missiles and drones—were intercepted or destroyed in the air. While no public military statement has specifically identified the fire-like lights seen over the bay, the conditions were highly consistent with a defensive posture involving illumination or signaling flares. These may have been deployed either as part of standard air defense coordination or as a means of preparing or deterring possible follow-up strikes.

In this context, the flare explanation is not only reasonable but likely. However, as the next section explores, the interpretation of such a technically mundane event does not remain within the realm of military protocol. Instead, once images like these enter the global information ecosystem—particularly within religiously charged communities—their meaning is rapidly transformed, often in ways that far exceed their original tactical purpose.

3. Spectacle as Spiritual Trigger

Throughout history, the visual realm has served as a powerful conduit for spiritual interpretation. In times of war, chaos, or uncertainty, moments of visual drama—especially those involving light, fire, or events in the sky—often provoke religious reflection and apocalyptic expectation. In the context of modern warfare, where technological events unfold against darkened skies and are often caught on camera, the boundary between military spectacle and prophetic sign becomes thin and highly permeable.

The visual event over Haifa, with its slowly descending pillars of fire illuminating the sea below, closely resembles the biblical motif of "fire from heaven." This imagery recurs throughout both the Old and New Testaments, often as a sign of divine presence, judgment, or validation. In 2 Kings 1, fire from heaven consumes soldiers sent to seize Elijah, establishing the prophet's divine authority. In Genesis 19, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah is executed through fire and brimstone falling from the heavens. In Revelation 13:13, the second beast is said to perform great signs, even making fire come down from heaven to earth in front of people—an explicit warning that deceptive spectacles can accompany false prophecy and lead to the worship of worldly powers.

Such motifs are deeply ingrained in the theological imagination of Christian Zionist audiences in the United States, who interpret modern events in the Middle East through the lens of biblical prophecy. For these audiences, Israel is not merely a nation-state; it is a fulfillment of scripture and the temporal stage upon which the final acts of redemptive history will unfold. This interpretive framework primes them to see signs and wonders not as coincidences or military operations, but as confirmations of a divine timetable. Fire in the sky over Haifa becomes, for many, a reaffirmation that God is present, active, and aligning history with scripture.

This theological openness to seeing divine significance in visual phenomena is exponentially amplified by modern media ecosystems. Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X), YouTube, and TikTok are filled with content creators who package footage like the Haifa flare drop with apocalyptic music, scriptural overlays, and emotionally charged commentary. In such spaces, the ambiguity of a military event becomes a canvas upon which prophecy is projected. These interpretations travel fast and wide, reaching millions of users—particularly those already immersed in end-times discourse, charismatic movements, or political-religious ideologies rooted in dispensationalism.

The psychological mechanism at play here is not irrationality, but confirmation bias embedded within an eschatological worldview. When the expectation of signs exists, and when prophecy is understood not as allegorical but as literal and imminent, even the most ordinary event can become proof of the extraordinary.

In this framework, seeing fire fall from the sky over Israel is not a matter for investigation—it is a validation of long-held belief. The image becomes a mirror, reflecting back what the viewer already believes to be true.

Crucially, this process does not depend on the intentions of those who launched the flares. The military may have deployed them for tactical reasons entirely unrelated to psychological manipulation. But once the image exists, it enters a religious semiotic system in which its meaning is no longer defined by its physical origin but by its theological resonance. In that moment, a flare becomes a sign, and war becomes sanctified—not through the Word of God, but through the manipulation of light, fire, and spectacle.

4. Scofield's Legacy: Engineering Belief for Political Ends

To understand the theological susceptibility of modern Christian Zionist audiences to events like the Haifa flare drop, one must trace the intellectual and spiritual lineage that made such interpretations not only possible, but expected. At the center of this lineage is the Scofield Reference Bible, first published in 1909 and distributed widely throughout the English-speaking Protestant world. Though at first glance an ordinary King James Version Bible, Scofield's edition subtly and powerfully reshaped American Christianity by embedding a novel interpretive framework—dispensational premillennialism—into the margins of scripture.

Cyrus Ingerson Scofield was not a trained theologian but a converted lawyer whose theology was heavily influenced by the British Plymouth Brethren and particularly by the ideas of John Nelson Darby, the architect of modern dispensationalist thought. In Scofield's hands, this complex theological system was condensed and disseminated to the American public in the most authoritative form possible: embedded within the sacred text itself. His study notes, treated by many as near-canonical, offered a framework in which the history of the world was divided into discrete "dispensations", culminating in a final, cataclysmic confrontation between good and evil centered in the land of Israel.

The intent behind the Scofield Bible, whether consciously political or not, was clear in its outcome: it transformed Christian eschatology from a symbolic or spiritual narrative into a literal geopolitical roadmap. Israel was not just the backdrop of biblical history—it was the centerpiece of the future. The Jewish return to Palestine was not a political event to be debated or understood in terms of colonialism, nationalism, or diplomacy; it was a divinely mandated prerequisite for the Second Coming of Christ. Through this lens, support for a modern political state became an article of faith.

This theological framework found fertile ground in the American religious imagination, particularly among evangelical and fundamentalist groups during the early 20th century. By mid-century, dispensationalist thought had fused with American exceptionalism and Cold War anti-communism to produce a powerful ideological blend: a belief that the United States had a God-ordained role to play in protecting and promoting the state of Israel. By the time of the Reagan administration, Christian Zionism had become a central pillar of the religious right, and the Scofield Bible—by then in its updated Oxford editions—was standard in countless churches and seminaries.

The alignment of dispensational theology with Zionist and imperial objectives was not coincidental. The notion that Israel must be defended at all costs because of its role in prophecy provided a theological justification for American military and diplomatic support, even in cases where such support contradicted the teachings of Jesus regarding peace, justice, and mercy. More disturbingly, this theology inverted moral logic: rather than viewing war as a tragic consequence of sin, many believers came to see it as a necessary stage in God's plan. The shedding of blood became not a cause for lament, but a confirmation that prophecy was unfolding.

In the 21st century, this legacy continues to shape the worldview of millions of American evangelicals. Contemporary political figures such as Mike Pence, Mike Pompeo, and former President Donald Trump have all benefitted from the unwavering support of Christian Zionist voters whose beliefs about Israel are still filtered through the dispensationalist lens handed down by Scofield. These voters do not necessarily see themselves as political operatives, but as participants in a

divine narrative—called to support Israel not as a matter of policy, but of obedience.

This worldview, shaped by a century-old editorial apparatus, is extraordinarily vulnerable to symbolic manipulation. In an age when warfare is waged not only with bombs and bullets but with imagery and narrative, the Scofield system provides a ready-made interpretive matrix. Every explosion, every skirmish, every spectacle in the skies above Israel is slotted into a prophetic storyline. In this context, a flare descending over Haifa at night may carry far more theological weight than any State Department briefing or press release.

Scofield's greatest legacy, then, may not be theological clarity but political pliability: the transformation of spiritual longing for the return of Christ into an uncritical, deeply emotional allegiance to a nation-state whose actions are perceived as synonymous with God's will. This legacy, still thriving today, makes the engineering of belief not only possible but disturbingly efficient.

5. Target Audience: Christian Zionists and the MAGA Electorate

The psychological operation described in this paper—whether intentional or opportunistically leveraged—finds its most potent audience within a distinct subset of the American electorate: Christian Zionists, many of whom form a core constituency of the Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement. Understanding how this group interprets international events, especially those involving Israel, is essential to grasping the power of manufactured spectacle and theological manipulation in modern warfare.

Christian Zionists represent a significant demographic within American evangelicalism. Estimates vary, but surveys consistently show that between 50–80 million Americans identify as evangelical Christians, and a large percentage of them believe that the state of Israel plays a central role in the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. For this group, support for Israel is not merely political; it is spiritual, covenantal, and eschatological. They see themselves as participants in a divine

narrative in which God's promises to Abraham are eternal and unconditional, and where the physical land of Israel is the stage for end-time events.

Politically, these beliefs translate into unwavering support for pro-Israel policies, often regardless of the actions of the Israeli government or broader ethical considerations. This alignment was dramatically intensified during the Trump administration, which positioned itself as the most pro-Israel presidency in American history. Trump's decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem, recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, and broker normalization deals between Israel and Arab states was interpreted by many evangelicals as evidence of divine favor—not just for Israel, but for Trump himself.

This convergence of Christian Zionist theology and MAGA nationalism has created a powerful political bloc, one that wields considerable influence over Republican politics and U.S. foreign policy. It also produces a highly specific media environment—populated by Christian television networks, prophecy-focused YouTube channels, and social media influencers—where international developments are routinely filtered through a dispensationalist lens. In this world, wars, treaties, and celestial events are rarely just geopolitical—they are signs from God, affirming that history is hurtling toward its prophesied conclusion.

Within this interpretive ecosystem, signs and wonders play a critical role. Fire in the sky over Haifa is not assessed in terms of military strategy or meteorological explanation; it is received as visual confirmation of spiritual truth. The symbolic is immediately collapsed into the prophetic. Audiences conditioned by years of eschatological teaching are deeply receptive to such imagery, and social media accelerates their exposure and response. Videos are shared with captions referencing Revelation, Joel, or Ezekiel; commentary frames the scene as part of the birth pangs of the Messiah's return. The emotion generated is not fear or curiosity—it is conviction.

This environment creates a profound vulnerability to manipulation, particularly through symbolically charged media. Whether or not the original intent of a flare drop is theatrical, its afterlife in the information ecosystem most certainly is. For Christian Zionist and MAGA-aligned viewers, these visuals confirm what they

already believe: that God is moving in history, that their support for Israel is righteous, and that Trump (or whichever political figure is aligned with these values) is part of a divine plan. This feedback loop—between spectacle and belief—renders traditional political discourse almost irrelevant. What matters is not policy analysis, but theological validation through visual resonance.

The danger, of course, is that theology becomes a form of emotional programming, and religious conviction is hijacked in service of military or nationalist aims. When flares become fire from heaven, and political actions are interpreted as messianic moves, discernment is replaced by devotion—not to Christ, but to a geopolitical order clothed in prophetic language. This vulnerability is not accidental; it is the end result of decades of theological engineering, media reinforcement, and political seduction.

As subsequent sections will show, such belief is not just misguided—it is mobilized. The power of spectacle to activate spiritual instincts has become a central feature of modern psychological operations, and nowhere is this more effective than among populations already conditioned to see in signs what others see as strategy.

6. Manufactured Signs: From Flares to Divine Confirmation

The transformation of ordinary military actions into perceived divine interventions does not require the miraculous—only the ambiguous. A slow-falling flare over a city under threat, captured on camera, framed just right, and disseminated to the right audience, becomes something far greater than the sum of its parts. It becomes a sign. The power of psychological operations (PSYOPs) in the modern era lies not only in what is done, but in what is suggested. Ambiguity is not a bug of such operations; it is a design feature.

From a rational military perspective, flares are routine and unremarkable. They are used to illuminate the battlefield, disorient adversaries, signal aircraft, or even function as decoys for heat-seeking missiles. But when viewed outside of their immediate tactical context—especially in a heightened emotional environment—

they can be easily misunderstood or, more accurately, reinterpreted through an existing spiritual framework. The viewers fill in the gaps. They are the ones who attribute meaning. This is what makes ambiguity so effective: it allows belief to do the work of interpretation.

This dynamic is central to PSYOP design. Ambiguous signs provoke inquiry, wonder, or fear. The viewer begins asking questions—*What is that? Why did it happen here? What does it mean?*—and within belief-based communities, these questions are rarely answered with technical precision. Instead, they are answered with scripture. Within the Christian Zionist ecosystem, a fire descending silently over the Holy Land on a night of war is not an accident of war—it is a divine message. And crucially, no state actor or military force has to claim responsibility for the theological interpretation. The beauty of symbolic PSYOPs is that the interpretation is *outsourced* to the target audience. The viewers convince themselves.

This phenomenon is not new. History is replete with examples of religiously charged visual manipulation in wartime. During World War II, Allied and Axis powers both used celestial imagery in propaganda posters—rays of light from the heavens, crosses over battlefields, or angels watching over soldiers—to imply divine favor. In more recent history, footage of precision strikes shown from drone perspectives has been stylized to look like righteous judgment—clinical, clean, and above all, *justified*. When the United States invaded Iraq in 2003, images of "shock and awe" were coupled with language about evil regimes, crusades, and spiritual darkness, subtly invoking the spiritual without making explicit religious claims.

But perhaps the most poignant examples lie in more recent Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. Video clips of Iron Dome interceptors lighting up the sky are often overlaid with religious music and verses, shared as signs of God's protection over Israel. At the same time, when airstrikes hit Gaza, some online commentators interpret the resulting explosions—shaped by physics and topography—as signs of God's wrath or divine purification. In both cases, the raw material of war becomes the basis for spiritual myth-making.

The event over Haifa fits cleanly into this lineage. A non-lethal, likely defensive deployment of flares during heightened military alertness becomes, through ambiguity and aesthetic resonance, a form of belief reinforcement. Viewers who are already primed by theology and social media cues interpret the event as a moment of supernatural validation. Their worldview is affirmed. Their loyalty is deepened. Their resistance to doubt is fortified. All without a single sermon, policy paper, or military communiqué.

This is the strength—and the danger—of non-lethal visual PSYOPs. Unlike traditional propaganda, which requires direct messaging, modern spectacle-based operations rely on *implication*. They operate in the domain of suggestion, semiotics, and affect. The event does not tell the audience what to believe; it simply gives them something to believe in. The belief fills the void left by ambiguity. And because the viewer discovers the "meaning" themselves, the belief is held more tightly. It was not imposed; it was revealed.

In this way, flares become fire from heaven. Smoke becomes incense. Light becomes revelation. And war becomes holy.

7. The Cost of Weaponized Belief

When belief is no longer shaped by inward conviction but by outward spectacle, it becomes not only manipulable—it becomes dangerous. The enduring fusion of prophetic expectation with military violence has created a theological posture in which warfare is not merely tolerated, but anticipated and even welcomed. This weaponization of belief, especially in Christian Zionist circles, carries with it profound and far-reaching consequences—spiritually, politically, and globally.

First, the alignment of prophecy with violence erodes the ethical core of Christian witness. For centuries, Christian teaching has emphasized peacemaking, mercy, and love for enemies as central tenets of discipleship. Jesus' teachings in the Sermon on the Mount are unequivocal in this regard: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). Yet in dispensationalist, Zionist-influenced theology, these teachings are often

subordinated to a larger, supposedly prophetic narrative in which violence is not only permitted, but inevitable. War becomes the birth pang of redemption. Suffering becomes necessary collateral. In this worldview, any call for de-escalation or diplomacy is seen not as Christlike restraint, but as spiritual naivety—or even betrayal of God's plan.

As a result, the peacemaking impulse within evangelical communities is suppressed. Pastors who speak out for Palestinian rights or question U.S. support for Israeli military actions risk alienating congregations trained to see such views as apostate. Activists who call for nonviolent solutions to the region's conflicts are dismissed as either naïve idealists or, worse, agents of Satanic opposition to Israel's destiny. The theological machinery engineered through Scofield's framework—and now animated through digital spectacle—has left little room for humility, nuance, or repentance. Instead, it has created a self-reinforcing culture in which violence confirms belief, and belief blesses violence.

This posture carries significant geopolitical risks, particularly when amplified by political leaders who recognize the electoral utility of religious allegiance. When policy becomes entangled with prophecy, flexibility is lost. Negotiation becomes betrayal. Treaties become delays. Compromise becomes sin. In such a climate, religious conviction becomes a hardening agent in foreign policy, encouraging maximalist positions and eschewing pragmatic diplomacy. The United States, influenced by a vocal and organized Christian Zionist base, has often adopted foreign policies that reflect theological commitments more than strategic reasoning. This has not only contributed to the intractability of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but also undermined America's credibility as a mediator on the world stage.

Moreover, in the age of social media and engineered spectacle, the line between discernment and delusion continues to blur. The erosion of discernment is perhaps the most devastating consequence of weaponized belief. When every flare becomes a sign, every war a step toward Armageddon, and every politician who supports Israel a messianic figure, the spiritual imagination becomes colonized by political expediency. The tools of psychological manipulation—light,

sound, symbols—are no longer recognized as tools. They are mistaken for theophanies. And once discernment collapses, the faithful no longer ask *Is this true?*, but rather *Does this feel like confirmation of what I already believe?*

In such an environment, truth itself becomes secondary. What matters is alignment. What matters is affirmation. And what is lost, tragically, is the capacity of the Church to stand as a moral witness—speaking not for empire or ideology, but for the crucified and risen Christ who came not to destroy lives, but to save them.

If we do not confront the cost of this weaponized belief—if we do not disentangle faith from firepower and prophecy from propaganda—we risk perpetuating a false gospel. One that exchanges the Prince of Peace for the engines of war, and the still, small voice of truth for the blinding flash of manufactured signs.

8. Conclusion

The flare event over Haifa presents a revealing case study in the dual-layer nature of modern symbolic warfare. On one level, the event was militarily mundane: most likely a routine deployment of aerial flares over water, possibly for illumination, signaling, or decoy purposes during an active air defense posture amid escalating regional tensions. There were no explosions, no casualties from this specific spectacle, and no official attribution to anything beyond standard military operations. And yet, on a deeper, more culturally embedded level, the event became spiritually potent—transmuted into a divine sign in the eyes of many who witnessed it virtually, particularly within American Christian Zionist communities. What was tactical and temporal became, through a specific theological lens, transcendent and eternal.

This transmutation is not accidental. It rests on more than just psychological suggestion or media virality. It depends on a century-old theological infrastructure, most notably that laid down by the Scofield Reference Bible. Scofield's dispensationalist framework gave American evangelicals a way to read the Bible—and by extension, the world—in terms of a literalist, time-locked

prophecy system centered on the nation-state of Israel. In doing so, it created a theological precondition for manipulation, embedding in the evangelical imagination an expectation of signs, a readiness for apocalyptic affirmation, and a spiritual obligation to support Israel politically, militarily, and uncritically.

This enduring theological system not only sets the stage for visual phenomena to be interpreted as divine, it encourages a reflexive allegiance to worldly powers masquerading as spiritual necessities. When a flare becomes "fire from heaven," when a military maneuver becomes an act of divine intervention, and when state policy becomes indistinguishable from God's will, the faithful are no longer discerning—they are instrumentalized.

It is precisely for this reason that theological literacy and skepticism must be urgently reclaimed within the Church and among the broader public. Literacy does not mean cynicism; it means understanding the historical, textual, and doctrinal roots of one's belief system—and being able to separate the revealed word of God from the crafted images of war. Skepticism does not mean doubt in God; it means questioning whether every spectacular event aligns with Christ's character, purpose, and mission. A Christianity that cannot tell the difference between a flare and a miracle is not spiritually alive—it is politically hijacked.

In an age where signs and wonders are easily staged, recorded, and distributed to millions within seconds, the danger of theological manipulation is no longer theoretical—it is immediate and operational. The faithful must ask: *Who benefits from the way I interpret this event? Whose agenda is advanced when I see fire and call it prophecy?* These are not merely academic questions. They are spiritual imperatives.

The Haifa flare event reminds us that we live in an age of layered meaning. Not all that glows is divine. Not all that descends from the sky is a message from heaven. And not all who claim alignment with God's plan are advancing His kingdom. Until Christian communities, particularly in the United States, recover the tools of critical discernment, they will remain vulnerable to belief engineered by spectacle and loyalty harvested by light. What is needed is a return not only to Scripture,

but to the Spirit of Christ—who spoke truth in quiet places and warned against the deceivers who would come with signs and wonders to lead many astray.

Epilogue: Imagine What Scenes AI Could Fake

If flares over Haifa can ignite prophetic fervor among millions, imagine what could be achieved with intention—using AI.

The images analyzed in this paper were real. They occurred in time and space, over a real city under the threat of war. Yet their interpretation, their *power*, came not from their physical presence, but from their symbolic resonance. They were effective not because they struck, but because they *appeared*. Now imagine a future—already arriving—where appearance can be fabricated entirely.

AI systems can now generate hyper-realistic videos, simulate missile launches, fabricate celestial events, and even animate divine apparitions. In the hands of nation-states, ideological movements, or religious opportunists, such tools can be used to manufacture signs tailored precisely to an audience's expectations. A glowing pillar over Jerusalem. An angel above Washington. A mushroom cloud over Damascus that never was.

The age of engineered spectacle is no longer hypothetical; it is imminent. If unexamined theology and engineered visuals already shape belief, what will happen when the event itself is fictional, but the faith it triggers is real? In such a world, the only firewall left is discernment—moral, theological, and digital.

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- Al Jazeera. “Iran Launches Retaliatory Strike: Analysis of Impact on Israeli Civilian Centers.” *Al Jazeera English*, June 21, 2025.
  (Includes regional analysis and media footage dissemination timelines.)